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EXAMINER

NASH, LASHANYA RENEE

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2153

DATE MAILED: 10/10/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/982,145

Applicant(s)

NASSIRI, NICK

Examiner

LaShanya R. Nash

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 July 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 46-48 and 50-52 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 46-48 and 50-52 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This action is in response to an Amendment filed 14 July 2006. Claims 46-48, and 50-52 are presented for further consideration. Claims 1-45, and 49 are cancelled. Claims 50-52 are new. Claim 46 is currently amended.

Allowable Subject Matter

The indicated allowability of claims 46-48 is withdrawn in view of the newly discovered reference to Epstein (US Patent 6,023,510). Rejections based on the newly cited reference follow.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which the subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 46-48, and 50-52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sykes, Jr. (US Patent Application Publication 2002/0129108), in view of Byrd (US Patent 6,081,899) and Epstein (US Patent 6,023,510), hereinafter referred to as Sykes, Byrd, and Epstein respectively.

In reference to claim 46, Sykes discloses a method and system for archiving, registering, and verifying electronic communications transmitted between clients and

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recipients via a network (i.e. Internet), (abstract and paragraph [0004], lines 1-13).

Specifically, Sykes discloses the third party archiving and verification system to comprise:

- The method for registering and certifying an electronic message, the method, (abstract; paragraph [0004], lines 1-13; and paragraph [0038], line 1 to paragraph [0040], line 17), comprising the steps of:
- A client accessing a website and establishing a registration account, (paragraph [0048]; Figures 4-22);
- A processing unit (i.e. third party archiving and verification server; paragraph [0038]) accepting the registration account (i.e. server of provider web page; paragraph [0048]);
- The processing unit assigning a code (i.e. account ID) to the registration account of the client, (paragraph [0048], line 1 to paragraph [0049], line 16 and Figure 4); and
- The client selecting a service request (i.e. user selects confirm email; paragraph [0062], lines 1-4; Figure 21);
- The processing unit receiving the client's service request, (i.e. system receives email; paragraph [0062], lines 4-7; Figure 21);
- The processing unit sending the electronic email message to the intended recipient as identified by the client in the registration account, (i.e. system delivers the email to recipients inbox; paragraph [0062], lines 8-19; Figure 22)

- The processing unit confirming the date the electronic message was received by the intended recipient (i.e. date and time stamp of message read by recipient; paragraph [0065], lines 11-13; Figure 27-"Date: September 5, 2001 Time: 05:22:01 PM");
- The processing recipient choosing whether or not to post a reply for the client with the processing unit, the processing unit accepting the reply, if posted (paragraph [0043], line 1 to paragraph [0044], line 17; Figure 26);
- The processing unit creating a confirmation record (i.e. message table entry) (paragraph [0038], line 1 to [0047], line 12; paragraph [0059], line 1 to paragraph [0061], line 8; and paragraph [0065], lines 9-13; Figure 26).

Although Sykes discloses substantial features of the claimed invention, the reference fails to show the processing unit creating a digital certificate containing the information of the confirmation of the confirmation record; the processing unit archiving the digital certificate information; and the processing unit sending the client the digital certificate. Nonetheless, digital certificates were well known in the art at the time of the invention, as further evidenced by Byrd. Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to accordingly modify the method as disclosed by Sykes.

In an analogous art, Byrd discloses a method for validating electronic messages in order to prevent tampering, (abstract). Byrd further discloses the message validating method comprises a processing unit creating a digital certificate containing the information of the confirmation of the confirmation record (i.e. user's digital certificate

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issued by authority; column 3, lines 35-48; Figure 3-items 401, 407); the processing unit archiving the digital certificate information (i.e. database stores digital certificate; column 3, lines 35-58); and the processing unit sending the client the digital certificate (i.e. return receipt; Figure 5-item 505; column 4, lines 19-22). One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to implement the digital certificate in the aforementioned method of Sykes, so as to further validate transmission by encoding electronic messages for protection against tampering of content (Byrd column 2, lines 19-33). Although Sykes and Byrd disclose substantial features of the claimed invention, the reference fails to explicitly disclose the method comprising: a service request further comprising that the client's identity be withheld from the intended recipient; the processing unit resending the electronic message to the intended recipient as identified by the client in the registration account; the processing unit notifying the intended recipient that the electronic message has been sent on behalf of the client by the processing unit. Nonetheless, these features would have been obvious modifications to the aforementioned method, as disclosed by Sykes and Byrd, for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, as further evidenced by Epstein.

In an analogous art, Epstein discloses a method of secure and anonymous electronic messaging via a public network (abstract). Epstein expressly discloses the well known use of an anonymous remailer which provides: service request comprising that the client's identity be withheld from the intended recipient; the processing unit resending the electronic message to the intended recipient as identified by the client in the registration account; the processing unit notifying the intended recipient that the

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electronic message has been sent on behalf of the client by the processing unit (column 1, lines 45-62). These modifications to the aforementioned method, as disclosed by Sykes and Byrd, would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art because one would have been so motivated to facilitate "bi-directional e-mail communication over a network without compromising the sender's identify", and thereby increasing user privacy, (Gabber column 2, lines 1-5).

In reference to claim 50, Sykes discloses a method and system for archiving, registering, and verifying electronic communications transmitted between clients and recipients via a network (i.e. Internet), (abstract and paragraph [0004], lines 1-13).

Specifically, Sykes discloses the third party archiving and verification system to comprise:

- The method for registering and certifying an electronic message, the method, (abstract; paragraph [0004], lines 1-13; and paragraph [0038], line 1 to paragraph [0040], line 17), comprising the steps of:
- A client accessing a website and establishing a registration account, (paragraph [0048]; Figures 4-22);
- A processing unit (i.e. third party archiving and verification server; paragraph [0038]) accepting the registration account (i.e. server of provider web page; paragraph [0048]);

- The processing unit assigning a code (i.e. account ID) to the registration account of the client, (paragraph [0048], line 1 to paragraph [0049], line 16 and Figure 4); and
- The client selecting a service request (i.e. user selects confirm email; paragraph [0062], lines 1-4; Figure 21);
- The service request further comprising that the content of the client's electronic message be verified by the processing unit, (i.e. notary verifies correct; paragraph [0051]);
- The processing unit receiving the client's service request, (i.e. system receives email; paragraph [0062], lines 4-7; Figure 21);
- The processing unit verifying the content of the electronic message, (i.e. notary verifies correct; paragraph [0051]);
- The processing unit sending the electronic email message to the intended recipient as identified by the client in the registration account, (i.e. system delivers the email to recipients inbox; paragraph [0062], lines 8-19; Figure 22)
- The processing recipient choosing whether or not to post a reply for the client with the processing unit, the processing unit accepting the reply, if posted (paragraph [0043], line 1 to paragraph [0044], line 17; Figure 26);
- The processing unit creating a confirmation record (i.e. message table entry) (paragraph [0038], line 1 to [0047], line 12; paragraph [0059], line 1 to paragraph [0061], line 8; and paragraph [0065], lines 9-13; Figure 26).

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Although Sykes discloses substantial features of the claimed invention, the reference fails to show the processing unit creating a digital certificate containing the information of the confirmation of the confirmation record; the processing unit archiving the digital certificate information; and the processing unit sending the client the digital certificate. Nonetheless, digital certificates were well known in the art at the time of the invention, as further evidenced by Byrd. Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to accordingly modify the method as disclosed by Sykes.

In an analogous art, Byrd discloses a method for validating electronic messages in order to prevent tampering, (abstract). Byrd further discloses the message validating method comprises a processing unit creating a digital certificate containing the information of the confirmation of the confirmation record (i.e. user's digital certificate issued by authority; column 3, lines 35-48; Figure 3-items 401, 407); the processing unit archiving the digital certificate information (i.e. database stores digital certificate; column 3, lines 35-58); and the processing unit sending the client the digital certificate (i.e. return receipt; Figure 5-item 505; column 4, lines 19-22). One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to implement the digital certificate in the aforementioned method of Sykes, so as to further validate transmission by encoding electronic messages for protection against tampering of content (Byrd column 2, lines 19-33). Although Sykes and Byrd disclose substantial features of the claimed invention, the reference fails to explicitly disclose the method comprising: a service request further comprising that the client's identity be withheld from the intended recipient; the

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processing unit resending the electronic message to the intended recipient as identified by the client in the registration account; the processing unit notifying the intended recipient that the electronic message has been sent on behalf of the client by the processing unit. Nonetheless, these features would have been obvious modifications to the aforementioned method, as disclosed by Sykes and Byrd, for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, as further evidenced by Epstein.

In an analogous art, Epstein discloses a method of secure and anonymous electronic messaging via a public network (abstract). Epstein expressly discloses the well known use of an anonymous remailer which provides: service request comprising that the client's identity be withheld from the intended recipient; the processing unit resending the electronic message to the intended recipient as identified by the client in the registration account; the processing unit notifying the intended recipient that the electronic message has been sent on behalf of the client by the processing unit (column 1, lines 45-62). These modifications to the aforementioned method, as disclosed by Sykes and Byrd, would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art because one would have been so motivated to facilitate "bi-directional e-mail communication over a network without compromising the sender's identify", and thereby increasing user privacy, (Gabber column 2, lines 1-5).

In reference to claims 47 and 51, Epstein shows the method whereby the processing unit clearly identifies a constant and verifiable email address of the processing unit and verifiable contact information of the processing unit, in the email to

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the intended recipient, (i.e. header information which points back to the remailer;
column 1, lines 45-62).

In reference to claims 48 and 52, Epstein shows the method whereby the intended recipient is notified that the intended recipient may choose to post a reply with the processing unit for the originator of the electronic message, (i.e. remailer retains the source address of message originators for replies to be forwarded, column 1, lines 45-62).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to LaShanya R Nash whose telephone number is (571) 272-3957. The examiner can normally be reached on 9am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenton Burgess can be reached on (571) 272-3949. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

LaShanya Nash
Art Unit 2153
September 30, 2006



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